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Editorials

CIA on Defensive Again

Another disturbing dribble of public information regarding activities of Central Intelligence agency employees has seeped through the supersecret atmosphere that surrounds this cloak-and-dagger organization.

Foreign Affairs magazine, widely read in academic and intellectual circles, published a supposedly objective and scholarly article on the political nature of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Members of Congress have learned, to their surprise, that the author is a full time employee of the CIA and that his analysis supports the views of the CIA. The catch is that the author's relationship with CIA was not disclosed.

This raises the question of whether CIA is trying to influence American public opinion by disguised or undercover methods. The CIA defense appears to be that its employee and analyst, George A. Carver, slipped off his CIA hat when he sat down at his typewriter. Nevertheless, CIA officials admit having cleared the article in advance of its submission for publication. The readers of Foreign Affairs were not let in on Carver's CIA connections.

The CIA, along with the United States Information agency, is supposed to restrict its activities and propaganda to overseas fields. The dangers in any

excursions into domestic politics and opinion making are obvious.

The Foreign Affairs incident is the third case of questionable CIA activities recently brought to public attention. One was the disclosure of CIA operatives being employed in a Michigan State university educational project in South Vietnam. Another was a CIA statement filed in federal court in Baltimore holding that one of its undercover agents could not be sued for libel by an Estonian resident of the United States and Canada because the alleged job of character assassination was carried out on official CIA orders.

The questions of impropriety in these three cases are additional arguments in favor of closer congressional supervision of CIA. At present the only congressional liaison with CIA is through an informal group of members of the Senate Armed Services and Appropriations committees. The CIA "screens" those who serve on this inner group. A request by the Senate Foreign Relations committee that it be represented, was denied.

Senator McCarthy of Minnesota is one of those who have urged that Congress be given broader supervisory powers over CIA. The recent developments strengthen his arguments for such action.